DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 064 432 UD 012 474

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TITLE	The Role of Leadership in School Desegregation.
SPONS AGENCY	Office of Education (DHEW), Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE	Nov 71
NOTE	44p.
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29
DESCRIPTORS	*Change Agents; Community Change; *Community Leaders; Integration Effects; Integration Litigation; Integration Methods; Integration Plans; Integration Readiness; *Negro Leadership; Political Issues; Racism; *School Community Relationship; *School Integration; Social Change
IDENTIFIERS	National Association Advancement of Colored People

ABSTRACT

In order to better understand the nature and consequences of social changes triggered by school desegregation, it should be instructive to analyze and interpret the patterns, stances, and roles of the leadership involved. For example, any valid interpretation of the role of leadership in the process of school desegregation would have to take into account the initiatory action of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). In direct opposition to the goals and actions of the NAACP, were racist groups and individuals who insisted upon the maintenance of complete, total segregation of schools. After carefully examining communities which have undergone the process of desegregation for almost 20 years, what has been learned that may help to make this process more orderly and rewarding in the future? (1) Court decisions regarding desegregation must be clear and unequivocal; (2) There must be an attitude of compliance with constituted law on the part of top school officials; (3) The support of the white elite or "power structure" is essential; and, (4) There must be a well-organized, respected black leadership class. (Author/JM)

ED 064432

THE ROLE OF LEADERSHIP IN SCHOOL DESEGREGATION

For
Teacher Development for Desegregating Institutions
U. S. Office of Education

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November, 1971

UD 012474

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Introduction

It is a long-established fact that leadership tends to take on enhanced significance during periods of revolutionary changes or social crises. The longer a given crisis endures the more pronounced and focussed the leadership role is likely to become. This proposition is basic in any realistic attempt to understand and interpret the role of leadership in the traumatic school desegregation process as it has so painfully transpired in one school system after another over the past two decades.

The crisis in public education, which actually amounts to a crisis in American society and culture, stems from the 1954 United States Supreme Court Decision.[1] This decision which outlawed segregation in public schools triggered a chain of revolutionary changes throughout the social system. The Justices apparently anticipated the revolutionary nature of their Decision and seriously modified it by inserting the phrase—"With all deliberate speed." In essence, this phrase was intended to make compliance evolutionary rather than revolutionary, whereby each school system could plan its own program of change and set its own timetable.

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1. Brown vs. Board of Education of Topeka, 347 U. S. (1954)

The U. S. Supreme Court's modified order to desegregate public schools gave white opposition leaders ample time to organize an effective, often invincible, white racist backlash in just about every community where there was a significant number of Black children. In most communities this racist backlash has been strong, viable and resourceful. Organized anti-desegregation forces have created and employed about every conceivable resistance tactic from peaceful persuasion, persistent legal procedures, such as new Black Codes, State Interposition, State-supported Segregation Commissions, to vicious anti-Black propaganda, economic reprisals, flagrant terror and lynching, and the closing of public schools. Thus by applying a variety of legal, extra-legal and illegal strategies, anti-desegregation forces have succeeded in frustrating both the intent and the spirit of federal court orders in just about all school systems with a relatively large number of Black children. Even today, after more than twenty years of planning, litigations, confrontations, negotiations, and circumventions, "nationwide, 61 percent of all Negro students attend schools which are 95 percent or more black."[2] While some communities have complied with federal orders to desegregate their schools, others have made hardly any progress at all. During the 1970-71 school year it was estimated that from 70 to 80 percent of all Black school children in the 11 southern states still attended all-Black schools.[3]

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2. Equal Educational Opportunity, Part I A, "Equality of Educational Opportunity: An Introduction" (Walter F. Mondale Report) U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 1970, p. 10 (An official Health, Education and Welfare report puts the figure at 67 percent).

3. Op. Cit., Part 3A, pp. 976 - 977

The fact is, desegregation had almost completely bogged down until 1969 when the U. S. Supreme Court changed its stance from "all deliberate speed" to "at once." This new language placed all eleven southern states under the immediate mandate to desegregate. Before then only about 18 percent at most of Black students were attending integrated classes.

As we look back upon the twenty years of litigation, community disruption and open violence related to school desegregation, it is necessary to pause and ask ourselves this basic question: Why, in a country where democratic principles are inherent in every child's socialization, has the process of desegregation aroused so much antagonism, division and pain in the society? The answer to this question, of course, is very complex. Essentially, we must look for the answer buried deeply in the ethos of the culture itself. Throughout the nation, particularly the South, there developed a biracial society in which Blacks have been traditionally regarded as lower status people. As such, they have been disesteemed and treated as less than first class citizens. Wittingly and unwittingly public school administrators and legislators, with the full support of the white community, and tacit support from the courts, established what amounted to second class schools for Black children. There was little or no attempt to give Black children equal educational opportunity in preparation for equal participation in American society.[4]

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4. Ibid. (Walter F. Mondale Report)

Consequently, when the U. S. Supreme Court ordered desegregation of public schools, the decision threatened the very heart of the biracial society by eleminating the basic rationale for racial inequalities in the social system. This is so because the doctrine of white supremacy permeates the very core, the ethos of our national culture. Essentially it holds that all white people are mentally superior and must be always socially superior to all Black people. Equal educational achievement would destroy this myth and the special privileges which white Americans have monopolized and withheld from Black Americans.5

It should have been expected that the great majority of white people would have opposed the desegregation of public schools. Historically, any move Black people have made to elevate themselves from their submerged social position has caused anxiety in the white community. However, the degree of opposition and conflict engendered by the U. S. Supreme Court's Desegregation order could hardly have been anticipated. Perhaps nothing symbolizes the almost total opposition it encountered in the South as did the adoption of the phrase "Black Monday," which refers to Monday, May 17, 1954.

Some large degree of opposition to desegregation, then, should have been expected. This gives rise to a second basic question: Knowing that opposition would arise, how did individual communities and school systems gear themselves to overcome deeply-rooted racial antagonisms which would certainly prevent orderly school desegregation? Generally speaking, since school desegregation would constitute a major social crisis, as would be

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5. Daniel C. Thompson, "Social Class Factors in Public School Education as related to Desegregation," The American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, Vol. XXVI, No. 3, July, 1956.

expected, communities involved turned to their established leadership to solve the problem. In some instances leaders were able to effectuate desegregation of schools in a more or less orderly manner. In most communities the leadership was able to avert conflicts, while others failed miserably. Not only were desegregation efforts frustrated, but whole school systems were paralyzed for long periods of time. Actually all school systems with a large number of Black students (a third or more enrolled) suffered serious disruptions which were reflected in the larger community. Therefore, in order that we might understand better the nature and consequences of social changes triggered by school desegregation, it should be instructive to turn to an analysis and interpretation of the patterns, stances and roles of the leadership involved.

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People

Any valid interpretation of the role of leadership in the process of school desegregation would have to take into account the initiatory action of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. Without the constant legal prodding administered by the NAACP there would have been no United States Supreme Court Decision outlawing segregated public schools. There is no reason to believe that local white leaders would have ever voluntarily taken steps to eleminate racial segregation in public school systems. As a rule they would not even acknowledge that the biracial system was discriminatory. Instead they had stubbornly insisted that schools for Black children were "equal" to schools for white children. This despite the fact that some school systems characteristically appropriated from

three to twenty times as much per capita for white children as they did for Black children.[6] Thus even public recognition that Black children were discriminated against had to be forced by NAACP legal action. So far as the records are concerned no local school board ever took voluntary action to desegregate its schools prior to federal court action.

The NAACP has been whittling away at the roots of racial segregation since its founding in 1910. It has attempted to advance the civil rights of Black Americans on many fronts. During the late 1930's the NAACP began to attack segregation at its very core—public tax-supported education. It began to make a significant dent in this area in 1938 in the Gaines case where the University of Missouri was ordered to admit a Black applicant.[7] From 1938-1950, the NAACP brought a series of cases before the Supreme Court which continued to operate under the "separate but equal" theory of the Plessy vs. Ferguson Doctrine (1896).[8]

In case after case NAACP--sponsored litigation charged public school districts with discrimination against Black children. Each case was carefully designed to undermine the institution of segregation, not just to achieve "equality" in segregated schools. NAACP leaders believed that if the South were forced to equalize educational opportunities for Black children, it would be so costly that school systems would voluntarily

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6. E. Franklin Frazier, The Negro In The United States (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1957) pp. 430-431

7. Gaines vs. Missouri, 1938

8. For a brief summary of some of the key cases see, Monroe Berger, Equality by Statute, (Garden City, New York., Doubleday and Company, 1967) pp. 121-129, and 141-150.

abandon their dual systems of education. "This hope of attacking segregation by a flank movement proved to be fanciful, for the southern states began to appropriate additional funds for Negro schools. . .The South was in effect strengthening 'Jim Crow' by establishing gilded cathedrals of segregation."[9] Consequently, the victories of the NAACP under the "separate but equal" doctrine actually backfired. "They were failures concealed by success."[10]

In 1945 the NAACP committed itself to a direct frontal attack on segregation in public schools. After about five years of research and preparation, in May 1950 the attack was launched: A suit was filed in the federal court in Charleston, S. C. on behalf of 67 Black children. They were asking to be admitted to Clarendon County public schools without regard to race. "This case along with similar ones eventually reached the Supreme Court, all of them taking the name of Brown vs. Board of Education of Topeka."[11] The decision in this case, as suggested above, had unmistakable implications not only for all levels of education but it opened the door for the democratic use of all publically-operated facilities. This is succinctly stated by Professor Quarles—

> "The Supreme Court's Decision in the School desegregation cases created a sense of crisis in the South. Ever since Reconstruction its social structure had been buttressed by both social and legal sanctions. Now the latter had received a body blow, one that threatened the whole social pattern of the South."[12]

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9. Benjamin Quarles, The Negro in the Making of America, (New York, Collier Books, 1964) p. 237

10. Ibid.

11. Benjamin Quarles, Op. Cit., p. 239

12. Ibid.

Even before the 1954 decision, segregationist forces in the South had begun to organize and retrench in anticipation of the imminent threat to its long established, deeply-rooted biracial system. Already old, anti-Black, anti-federal organizations had been revitalized and made their bids for political and economic power. Several new organizations appeared with the avowed intention of serving as "shock troops" in the fight to maintain segregation forever, at all costs. In all instances, the two main targets of the segregationist forces were the NAACP and the U. S. Supreme Court.

The full strength of the segregationist forces and the magnitude of their potential for resistance became quite evident in March, 1956. It was at that time that 19 Senators and 81 House members issued a "Southern Manifesto" calling for total resistance to school desegregation. This manifesto suggested that white leaders should use every means available—economic reprisals, legislative action, police action and court action—to frustrate federal court orders to desegregate.

While leading segregationists singled out federal courts and the NAACP to receive the brunt of their criticism, all civil rights organizations and activities in the South were suspected, threatened and frequently restricted. The NAACP was especially harassed. It was the object of constant investigations and legal prohibitions in every southern state. Its program was seriously hampered. It was fined $100,000.00 in Alabama, outlawed and had to carry on its operations as an underground organization.[13] Just about every attempt was made to "kill" the NAACP. It was even accused of being

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13. Langston Hughes, Fight for Freedom. The Story of the NAACP, (New York: Berkeley Medallion Books, 1962) pp. 129-147

a subversive, Communist-influenced organization bent upon undermining the government of the United States. Such relentless propaganda was designed skillfully to serve two interrelated functions: One, to cultivate an anti-NAACP public opinion which would demand a curtailment of its activities and influences, and two, to confuse the issue of desegregation with the much-publicized, alleged Communist conspiracy so that legal restrictions would be justified.

Perhaps no other issue in recent history so clearly marked the division between Blacks and whites as did the program of the NAACP in regard to public school desegregation. On the one hand, the more violent anti-NAACP propaganda became, the stronger the NAACP emerged. During this crisis-period membership in the NAACP became a necessary credential for all Black leaders and white liberals. Furthermore, such membership tended to symbolize racial loyalty on the part of the masses of Black people. They swelled the membership roll as never before. For instance, in 1962 the NAACP reported "a membership of 370,000 in 1,200 local branches in forty-four states and the District of Columbia. . .By the end of 1964 its membership was given a 455,839 in 1,848 branches in forty-eight states and the District of Columbia. An unaudited budget indicated that income for 1964 was $1,116,565.68."[14]

Furthermore, during the NAACP crisis and its struggle to make the Brown Decision effective, the Black community generally expected its leaders

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14. Kenneth B. Clark, "The Civil Rights Movement: Momentum and Organization," in Richard P. Young, ed., Roots of Rebellion (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1970) p. 298. See also, Daniel C. Thompson, "The Civil Rights Movement--1968," in Pat Romero, In Black America, (Washington, D.C., United Publishing Corporation, 1969) p. 72

to be staunch supporters of that organization. Actually, a life membership of $500.00 became an important credential for top Black leaders and organizations. Roy Wilkins, its national secretary, insisted that "Life members in the NAACP are the bedrock of the fight for Freedom." By 1964 the NAACP had over 10,000 individuals and organizations with Life Membership Certificates.[15] The fact is, all organizations in the Black community, including churches and even social clubs, were expected to contribute to the NAACP and the programs it sponsored.

On the other hand, the sinister, anti-American image segregationist leaders sought to pin onto the NAACP was successful to the extent that it destroyed whatever leadership role it might have played in establishing creative communication between Black and white leaders. This prevented the NAACP from making the contribution it was capable of making in the development of feasible, progressive school desegregation plans. Pragmatically, this was unfortunate because the long history of the NAACP's fight against segregation and discrimination had provided its leaders with a profound understanding of the problems and strategies of race relations. Logically, no other group of leaders was as capable of developing feasible plans for the desegregation of public schools as those trained by the NAACP. For thirty years or more its staff had done extensive research gathering mountains of information on the nature and consequences of segregated schools. Its

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15. Langston Hughes, Op. Cit. p. 131-134

lawyers had analyzed, interpreted and applied this information in scores of cases presented before courts on all judicial levels, particularly the Supreme Court. Directly and indirectly the NAACP staff and its lawyers had analyzed every conceivable approach and proposal ever offered to desegregate school systems. They had, themselves, developed numerous desegregation plans designed for individual schools, particular school districts and overall school systems.

While NAACP leaders, as individuals, succeeded in influencing school desegregation plans in some communities, NAACP plans as such were summarily rejected, regardless of how sound and feasible they may have been. There are at least three main reasons for this:

First, school boards' stance on the issue of desegregation is usually negative. Even the most compliant school boards have indicated some significant degree of reluctance regarding complete desegregation such as the NAACP would advocate.[16] Actually, "compliance" as understood by decision makers in public education has generally meant to make only those changes absolutely required by a strict interpretation of the letter of the law. Seldom indeed have they indicated a willingness to go any step beyond the minimum requirement. This then would put them in direct opposition to NAACP leaders who constantly press for complete desegregation and the most liberal

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16. Robert L. Crain, The Politics of School Desegregation (Chicago: Aldine Publishing Co., 1968) Chapter 11, pp. 138ff.

interpretation of court orders to desegregate. According to records, there has been hardly any school board, North or South, whose members were chosen specifically to abolish the biracial system in education without pressure from federal courts. Even the most liberal school boards are generally constituted by members who are expected by their constituents or sponsors to accomplish as little as possible insofar as desegregation is concerned. Somehow the majority of board members have felt called upon to move in that direction only in compliance with clearly stated federal court orders.

Second, school boards have rejected NAACP plans, even when they were later adopted under different sponsorship, because insofar as the white leadership structure is concerned the NAACP is an "outsider." Its dedication to the proposition that extensive, depth changes must be made in the status quo presents a constantly disturbing threat to the white establishment. It is regarded as the most identifiable protagonist of the culture of the biracial system. As such, plans designed by the NAACP would have to be rejected on their face by establishment leaders, who could hardly afford to sanction the validity of the NAACP as a legitimate leadership group. This fact disturbed some school officials who were willing to acquiesce to court orders to desegregate. They knew that NAACP participation would activate a white backlash. A notable example is the action taken by Dr. Omer Carmichael, who was Superintendent of the Louisville school system. He acknowledged that he timed the starting of desegregation because "I wanted desperately to be ahead of the NAACP. I wanted to have a tentative plan—I knew NAACP

would be in very promptly, and sure enough, they were before the next board meeting--within less than two weeks."17

Third, on a subtle sociological level, it is well understood that the status of the planner directly influences the response a social system will make to a given plan. Consequently, desegregation plans presented by persons or groups of high esteem and power in a given community are much more likely to be accepted than plans originated by lower-status, relatively powerless individuals or groups. Though certain leaders of the NAACP are acknowledged to be high status individuals with considerable social power, the NAACP itself, has always identified with low status, more or less powerless individuals and groups, and has championed causes which are generally ignored or opposed by powerful white community leaders. Here again it would have to be expected that NAACP-sponsored plans would likely be rejected by school boards representing established white organizations, groups and interests. Accepting the NAACP as a community planner would in essence amount to legitimating it as a high status, powerful community organization. This in itself would symbolize significant social changes which school board members are usually elected to resist.

Finally, though the NAACP has been the initiator of the school desegregation process it has not had sufficient opportunity to play a significant role in the architecture of social action which would assure the success of this process. The fact is, in several instances school

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17. Herbert Wey and John Corey, Action Patterns in School Desegregation (Bloomington, Indiana: Phi Delta Kappa, 1959) p. 31

boards in particular, and the masses of white people in general, actively opposed desegregation primarily because they interpreted it to be an NAACP-inspired and engineered social change. Therefore, during the ten years, 1954-1964, when the NAACP was almost totally responsible for prodding stubborn school districts to desegregate or comply with the Supreme Court's order, a well-organized, well-financed, dedicated white backlash made every slow step toward the elimination of a dual school system both socially painful and terribly costly. Thus in 1964 only about two percent (2.25) of Black children in the eleven old Confederate states attended schools with white children.[18]

As the initiator of court action to force compliance with the "law of the land," as interpreted in the Brown Decision, the NAACP became the inherent "enemy" of the bi-racial status quo. This automatically pitted it against official policy makers in community after community throughout the nation. NAACP lawyers were constantly opposed by lawyers representing school boards directly, and conservative white communities indirectly. Desegregation cases were so hard fought and bitter that even when the NAACP won, segregationist forces generally refused to accept the courts' verdict: There often followed various forms of disruptions, demonstrations and violence.

By 1964 it had become clear to the U. S. Department of Justice that the NAACP should not be expected to assume the total burden as "watchdog" of the Court-ordered desegregation process. In the first place it was

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18. See: Southern Education Reporting Service (SERC), Statistical Summary 2, November, 1964.

too vulnerable to hostile state legislatures which, as noted above, were able to place disabling restrictions upon the organization to prevent it from performing its role. In the second place, the massive resistance mounted by so many school districts was simply too costly for the NAACP to assume alone. The legal cost was staggering. For example, the Brown case alone is estimated to have cost in excess of $100,000.00.[19]

Thus the NAACP did not have the resources or the social power necessary to exert the pressure to change the social system as radically as demanded. What power it had stemmed directly from the support of the federal courts. Even this proved to be insufficient because state legislatures and leaders in school districts found many ways of delaying, circumventing and otherwise ignoring court orders stemming from individual cases. Consequently, in 1964 Congress acted to put "teeth" into desegregation orders. It established a Civil Rights Act.

> "Title VII of the Civil Rights Act prohibits the extension of Federal financial assistance to any dual or segregated system of schools based on race, color, or national origin. To be eligible to receive, or to continue to receive such assistance, school officials must eliminate all practices characteristic of such dual or segregated school systems."[20]

The full force of Title VI was brought to bear through the federal judiciary "which grants authority to the Attorney General to initiate school desegregation lawsuits."[21]

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19. Langston Hughes, Op. Cit., p. 129

20. U. S. Office of Education (Department of Health, Education and Welfare) "General Statement of Policies under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 Respecting Desegregation of Elementary and Secondary Schools," April 1965.

21. Ibid.

This made it unnecessary for the NAACP to enter suits where flagrant resistance on the part of school districts was obvious. Though it has stayed in the fight for desegregation its main task has been to prove non-compliance with federal court orders. Enforcement itself is in the hands of federal agencies.

White Racism

In direct opposition to the goals and actions of the NAACP were racist groups and individuals who insisted upon the maintenance of complete, total segregation of schools. Though many reasons were given to justify and even to glorify the status quo in education, upon close examination racism was, in fact the obvious, primary cause for community resistance. A fruitful, functional definition of racism was presented by Anthony Downs. He insists that "racism is an attitude, action or institutional structure which subordinates a person or group because of his or their color."[22] As used here racism is the tendency to interpret all individual and social events according to deeply imbedded racial attitudes and beliefs. As such racism pervades just about every facet of community life, especially in long-segregated southern communities. Thus, some form of racism is obvious in the political life, courts, economic system, churches as well as schools in all studied communities faced with the problem of desegregation.[23] In communities where racial

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22. Anthony Downs, "The Nature of Racism in America, and How to Combat It," (Unpublished manuscript written for the U.S. Civil Rights Commission, November, 1968) p. 4

23. For a systematic study of this see Robert L. Crain, The Politics of Desegregation,(Chicago: Aldine Publishing Company, 1968)

segregation has been always a fact of life, all social decisions become essentially racist in nature. That is, any decision having to do with public affairs has to be influenced overtly or tacitly by the fact of race. The NEA Special Committee on Teacher Displacement concludes: "For the white establishment to admit equality of opportunity anywhere would be to undermine racial discrimination everywhere. This would mean the end of a way of life, with all of the cherished advantages for some and all of its hardships for others."[24]

One fact which becomes increasingly manifest as we study the consequences of racism in communities undergoing desegregation, is that none of the communities has seemed to understand the nature of racism well enough to deal with it in an intelligent manner. The main reason why this is so is that racism is much more than a personal attitude; it is an ideology, a way of life. It is a sort of over-simplified philosophy of human relations and is often so subtle that even the racist himself is not often aware of his racism. There is convincing evidence that school desegregation—certainly integration—will be hampered until responsible community leaders and educators understand better how to deal with racism more effectively than has been generally the case.

Degrees of Racism. To begin with, it is necessary to call attention to an obvious fact: Some individuals and organizations involved in

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24. The Mondale Report, part 3A, Desegregation Under Law, p. 1067

school desegregation are much more racist or prejudiced than are some others. Actually, the degree of racism on the part of individuals and groups is likely to vary in time, intensity and expression. At one extreme are avowed bigotted chauvanists. At the other extreme are some erstwhile white liberals who strongly disavow overt racism in their personal and social life. A superficial analysis will reveal at least four classifiable ideal-type racists:

1. The Militant Racists. Included in this classification are persons and groups who are avowedly dedicated to the preservation of white supremacy. Most would prefer to operate within the law, but there are usually fringe elements who are always ready and willing either to interpret the law as they would like for it to be, or to go beyond the law when it is deemed necessary. Actually the great influence that militant segregationists have in most desegregating communities stems primarily from the nature of their formal and informal organization: Their influence is not due so much to the large number who join anti-desegregation organizations as it is to the fact that varied talents are enlisted to oppose school desegregation.

One of the useful talents widely employed by militant racists is that of speechmaking. Among such orators are noted segregationists from several southern states who make a sort of career of speaking before mass meetings where school desegregation is the major concern. Also, there seems always to be a cadre of top business and professional men, particularly candidates for public office, available to propagandize popular anti-Black and anti-federal issues. Thus, in each of the communities where desegregation of schools has been a major issue, the case of the segregationist has been always eloquently presented. In almost all

instances the most effective of these speakers have adopted some version of the oratorical style of the old fashioned southern demogague. Characteristically such speakers are highly emotional, play upon traditional emotionally-packed symbols, make maximum use of racial stereotypes and usually appear at mass meetings in communities where school systems are in the first traumatic stages of developing desegregation plans in response to or in anticipation of federal court orders.

Between 1954 and 1964 when most federal cases for desegregation were filed by the NAACP, militant speeches made by segregationists were usually given wide publicity in local newspapers. "Mass communication media. . . are a stick swinging a mighty wallop in helping 'make or break' preparation programs for desegregation."[25] It is quite difficult, of course, to give an accurate assessment of the role of mass media except to say that wherever it has supported militant segregationists, the process of school desegregation has been slow and caused widespread community disturbance. For example, with the cooperation of mass media militant racists have been able to propagandize in the total community. In the beginning of the desegregation movement even the most avowedly "neutral" mass media in the South tended to give a disproportionate amount of coverage to anti-Black, anti-desegregationist ideas, rationales and points of view. (The anti-desegregation tone of most southern newspapers has changed considerably since the Civil Rights Acts of 1964 and 1965).

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25. Op. Cit. Herbert Way and John Corey, p. 36

In New Orleans two television stations—WWL and WDSU, carried live broadcasts of the debates in the state legislature which were concerned with the problem of desegregating the public schools. Whereas this added, comprehensive news coverage was interpreted as a desirable innovative public service, its actual effect was that it functioned to give wide, convincing publicity to militant racist attitudes and opinions. This was especially disconcerting to the Black community because, in the first place, there were no Blacks in the state legislature to counter the diverse propaganda, and in the second place, it was regarded as politically dangerous for white politicians to present a positive view on the problem of desegregation. Some even refused to take a positive stand on open schools if desegregation were the "price to pay."[26] In all instances mass media in southern communities tended, at least to propagandize, the ideologies and activities of militant segregationists. It was usually after the communities had entered the critical stage in race relations that news media would begin to assume some significant degree of positive leadership. A notable exception to this was the Little Rock Gazette, under Editor Harry Ashmore. Immediately after the 1954 Supreme Court Decision he took a firm stand for desegregated schools. During the grave school crisis in Little Rock, the Gazette lost about 20 percent of its readers.[27]

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26. The New Orleans School Crisis, (Report of the Louisiana State Advisory Commission on Civil Rights: 1961) pp. 31-37

27. Herbert Way and John Corey, Ibid.

In addition to the use of mass media, militant racists have used a variety of other means of propagandizing their views. In most communities they had no compunction for "standing up to be counted." For a decade, (1954-64) both planned and impromptu speeches denouncing desegregation were frequently made before PTA meetings, church groups, professional associations and in any gathering where public education was discussed. The White Citizens Council of New Orleans had one of the most unique propaganda techniques. It had convincing speakers to tape succinct desegregation speeches to be automatically relayed when a certain telephone number was dialed. These messages always dealt with crucial issues in desegregation. They particularly denounced the United States Supreme Court, Civil Rights organizations, Black leaders, and white liberals who identified in any way with the desegregation movement. Always the character, citizenship and intelligence of Blacks were impuned.

All in all the militant racists have developed strong, viable organizations. Not only have they managed to enlist a relatively large number of followers, but they have included and made use of wide variety of specialized talents and influences. This would include a "surging, jeering mass of teenagers shouting 2-4-6-8 we don't want to integrate,"[28] to state and national political figures who formulate top level school policy and influence legislation. Small wonder then that militant segregationists have been able to successfully spearhead what amounted to massive resistance to federal court orders to desegregate.

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28. Op. Cit. New Orleans School Crisis, p. 33

2. Non-Militant Racists. This category is very broad and includes individuals and groups of all social statuses, ideological postures and temperaments. The basic things they have in common are the belief in the doctrine of "white supremacy" and a proclivity to place the preservation of "white supremacy" (with all the special privileges that status implies) above general community welfare—to say nothing about the welfare of Black people.

In communities throughout the United States these people constitute a large segment of that unnumbered mass certain politicians have begun to refer to as the "silent majority." In some quarters the concept "silent majority" has become synonomous with racism or those who oppose changes in the biracial system. Though no systematic study has been done of this group of citizens, there is a sufficient amount of information available to conclude that for the most part, they are known in their communities as "law-abiding, hard-working, God-fearing, family people" who deeply believe in the rural-oriented, white Protestant, middle class values handed down to them from their ancestors. As a rule they are basically conservative and would likely oppose any significant changes in the social system. This would be true especially if a social change might have widespread reverberations such as desegregation would likely cause.

In essence, the main difference between the militant and non-militant racist is the difference between a politician who campaigns for public office on a racist platform which he aggressively propagandizes, and the citizen who can be relied upon to vote for him or otherwise support his

campaign because he promises to maintain or extend racial segregation. In this category also is the white parent who would hardly lead a boycott of a desegregated school but who would support it in every other way possible once it is begun. However, in some ways the non-militant racist becomes a more functional ally of the militant than simply supporting his segregationist programs. This happens when the non-militant racist is a person or organization with high prestige or significant social power. In each community studied such individuals have consciously or unconsciously set standards of race relations and the acceptability or non-acceptability of key social policy. They have been referred to as the "silent elite." The racial stances they take, to a large degree, set the standard for community response. For example, if a prestigious, socially-powerful family refuses to send its children to a desegregated school, that act is likely to become a symbol of rejection to be followed by less-prestigious families. In the same way members of the elite community may withhold endorsement of basic school desegregation plans thereby jeopardizing both the initiation and the probable success of such plans. The fact is in some communities, such as Atlanta and Houston with identifiable elite leaders, the school board would be reluctant even to submit a plan without their prior endorsement. Thus, the failure of the elite to respond to desegregation demands leads to community disruption and interferes with the operation of the school system.[29]

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29. Robert L. Crain, Op. Cit., Chapter 15

The silent elite then, has functioned as an influential non-militant racist element because even its non-action has been an important factor in the subordination of Black people.

3. Apologetic Racists. We may label a distinct and powerful anti-desegregation element found in every community as "apologetic." Their most salient characteristic is the tendency to give non-racist reasons for their racist opinions and acts. They, like their militant and non-militant cohorts, have been dependable opponents of school desegregation without attempting to justify their actions on strictly racial grounds. Generally, they give as their reasons for objecting to desegregation the fear that—"It will lower academic standards". . ."it will cause the deterioration of neighborhood schools;". . ."it will require inconvenient, expensive bussing;". . ."it is a violation of states rights," or "it is a Communist-inspired movement to overthrow the government of the U. S."

The main reason why this group usually wields so much influence is the fact that almost always it is composed of professionals with legitimate credentials in the field of education. Sometimes they are teachers reporting on actual classroom experiences; principals who formally report the lowering of academic standards or increased disciplinary problems; school board officials who insist that a given desegregation plan is unfeasible, scholars who raise questions about the abilities of Blacks, and pollsters who come up with pseudo-scientific evidence that desegregation is not wanted by the vast majority of people. Particularly damaging have been evaluations of certain schools and school districts by "teams of experts." These persons have been usually commissioned by school officials or state government

agencies bent upon proving that desegregation would in fact bring about a deterioration in academic standards and school management. They have studied school systems such as Washington, D. C., and have attempted to blame all of the problems discovered on the fact of desegregation.

The social power exerted by this group may be seen indirectly through actions taken by top political leaders and powerful community decision makers. These establishment elites are all too often experts in business projects and legislative and congressional policies. Most of them know little or nothing about the profession of education and education-administration. A prominent sociologist summarized his conception of this establishment elite. He said: "They are interested and knowledgeable about projects, not people." Therefore, when they must make key decisions about school policies and programs, they inevitably turn to the "experts" who have been selected, commissioned and validated by individuals and groups who are opposed to desegregation. They tend to emphasize, therefore, the problems and failures of a democratic education at the expense of the successes and promises.

4. The "Liberal" Racists. No other group in a desegregating community faces the dilemmas and stresses of social change as much as do erstwhile liberals. Before 1954 when the objective of Black leaders was that of achieving "equal rights" within the biracial system, white liberals functioned as go-betweens or negotiators for Black leaders. This was necessary because whites had a monopoly of social power. Black leaders could get little or nothing done unless they established a workable relationship with white men of power. Therefore, the most effective channel of communication

between Black leaders and white men of power was the small group of liberal whites who performed a distinct, functionally-necessary liaison role. It was essential then, for white liberals to be respected by white men of power at the same time they were trusted by Black leaders.

The U. S. Supreme Court's Decision in the Brown Case re-defined the role of the liberal. The white liberal had to identify with desegregation efforts and advocate equal, integrated education. Such a stance on the part of white individuals was very precarious during the crisis period of the late 1950's and throughout the 1960's. Truly liberal whites were labeled "renegades," "integrators," "left wingers," "Communists" and "nigger lovers." Faced with a relentless barrage of criticism and ostracism, most white liberals were simply unable or unwilling to remain identified with the Black thrust for total integration. This fact was stated by an outstanding Louisiana segregationist who observed that "most white liberals have run for cover." There were other white "liberals," however, who retreated from Black causes, not because of fear of the white backlash, but because they simply did not believe in integration. They were unable to serve "two houses," so to speak, as the traditional liberals had done. No longer could they walk in "two worlds" as one described her role. In other words, identification with the Black cause after 1954 has implied identification with the forces of change and not those striving to achieve the best possible compromise in a biracial society. This ideological redefinition of the liberals' role made that status uncomfortable. Most became truly marginal, not really belonging in any one world, Black or white. They suffered all of the suspicions, frustrations and criticisms of a marginal

group which is never quite trusted by either the racists or the Black community.[30]

In many instances the traditional liberal has become a functional racists. During the very height of the civil rights movement some of the most flexible white liberals joined sit-in demonstrations and otherwise supported the dangerous confrontations between Blacks and the white "Establishment." They suffered all of the insults and violence meted out to Black people, including assassinations. Yet there were others, usually the most established, powerful liberals, who began to complain that Black people were "pressing too hard," "being influenced by outsiders," "using the wrong strategies," "following illogical patterns of race relations," and "elevating the wrong Blacks to leadership positions." Therefore, while Black leaders and dedicated white liberals were fighting for school desegregation, white liberal racists were emphasizing the importance of "community control of public schools," making schools in the Black community equal to those in the white community, and constantly expressing the fear that direct action against segregation would result in the alienation of "white friends." Where there were unequivocal federal court orders to desegregate public schools, the erstwhile white liberals usually championed a policy of gradualism and tokenism. Thus, after school districts were forced to submit desegregation plans, instead of championing an all at once plan, powerful individuals in this category developed or supported plans for gradual desegregation such as "from the bottom up, from the top

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30. Daniel C. Thompson, The Negro Leadership Class, Op. Cit., pp. 70-79, 160-164, and Framework for the Future Vol. I. p. 94.

down, from both ends at the same time, selected schools, pupil assignment" and so forth.[31] In this way liberal racists sanctioned the actions of the more rabid racists which were calculated to frustrate the desegregation process. Thus, despite the fact that some have continued to support such uplift organizations as the NAACP, Urban League and Black Colleges, they function as racists in the sense that they make the "Negro Cause" a thing in itself rather than a total community or national cause. In essence their actions suggest that desegregation is a concession to be bestowed by whites—not an inalienable right.

Official Leadership

As noted above, in any large community there are likely to be several more or less well-organized social groups competing for social power. When some major community decision is to be made, a number of such groups will feel compelled to identify with one alternative or another. If the decision is basic, in the sense that it threatens the status quo, some of the groups will identify with the forces making for change (pro), others will identify with forces seeking to maintain the status quo (anti). The great masses of people in a community usually express their wishes as pro or con in three fundamental, ideal ways: One, as individuals they may write "Letters to the Editor," their congressmen, local officials, etc., and engage in personal protest to express their opinions. Two,

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31. Herbert Wey and John Corey, Action Patterns of School Desegregation, Op. Cit., p. 102

individuals may join together in public protests or demonstrations, in which their summary opinions are expressed in slogans and some form of action. And three, the masses of individuals may express their opinions through their official representative leaders.

Prior to an explanation of these three methods we should keep in mind that the issue of school desegregation is of such great consequence to individuals as well as to the social system that even citizens who ordinarily do not participate in social action have felt called upon to formulate and express their personal opinions. They have used all of the three means just cited. In regard to the first form of protest, for several years during the desegregation crisis I carried on an informal research regarding "Letters to the Editor," as published in a few selected big city newspapers in the South. The opinions expressed in the vast majority of the letters may be classified as negative in regard to the issue of desegregation. I was never quite sure whether the anti-desegregation opinions of the editors led them to select for publication those which most mirrored their own personal opinions, or whether the vast majority of their readers were in fact segregationists. It may be also that segregationists were more willing to express their opinions in this form. In any case, the fact remains that many individual citizens find this as the most tangible way of identifying themselves with or against proposed school desegregation plans.

The individual citizen, also, has resorted to personal protest of an abusive nature. In just about all communities where there is a large percentage of Black students in the school system, certain individuals

have used the telephone and other personal means to harrass officials whose stand on desegregation is contrary to their own. Some white segregation leaders also found themselves harrassed and abused, even threatened constantly by individuals who wanted to dissuade them from supporting plans for desegregation. In the same manner, certain citizens would take it upon themselves to visit key officials in order to express their segregationist views or to criticize moves toward desegregation among their peers.

A second level of individual expression has been organized action. In most cities where competing groups are strong, there have been mass meetings, mass marches, boycotts and/or other forms of mass behavior designed to express strong community displeasure. As a rule, these demonstrations are tenuous, irregular and bring together many individuals who have only this one salient social issue in common. They usually differ in terms of age, social class and political ideology.

While all of the means above have been used by individual citizens to express their opinions for or against the process of desegregation, the influence they exert is generally indirect. However, this indirect influence is often decisive in the sense that official leaders may respond positively to it. In actual fact, officials in some communities such as in Cairo, Illinois, Greenbriar, West Virginia and Bay City, Texas, responded to citizens' pressure by vacillation, inaction, and changing decisions that they had made already because they met opposition.[32] It is interesting to note that where official leaders vacillated under mass pressure,

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32. Herbert Wey and John Corey, Action Patterns in School Desegregation, Op. Cit., pp. 158-159, and Robert L. Crain, The Politics of School Desegregation, Op. Cit., pp. 48-50

communities experienced a kind of "anomie" or normlessness. The issues were thoroughly confused and respect for law and order descended to a low ebb. Invariably the issue of "good" education was lost and decisions were made to please one group or another and not what was good for the school system itself.

A third level at which individual citizens may express their opinions is through duly organized group behavior. The most significant, of course, is political action. In St. Louis, for instance, the citizens deliberately elected a school board with a majority of its members sympathetic to desegregation. The very opposite was true in New Orleans, where school desegregation was an extremely traumatic experience. The majority of its school board members during the crisis were elected because of their segregationist views.

The key question, then, is this: After carefully examining communities which have undergone the process of desegregation for almost 20 years, what have we learned that may help us to make this process more orderly and rewarding in the future? The answer is quite complex. Its complexity stems primarily from the nature of American society, itself. It is inherent in the democratic process that individuals, groups and communities must be accorded freedom to pursue their welfare according to the dictates of their own conscience so long as it does not violate the civil rights of others. This was indeed the spirit of the 1954 Supreme Court Decision in the Brown Case. The Justices recognized that school desegregation in some communities would be more complex and difficult than in others. Their language, "all deliberate speed," recognized this fact and suggested compliance in accord with local situations. The spirit of this decision has been violated by

states and local communities which, instead of transcending traditional barriers to desegregation, proceeded to expand old barriers and erect new ones designed to make desegregation more difficult than it would have been ordinarily. Thus, in 1963 the Justices themselves agreed that they "never contemplated that the concept of 'deliberate speed' would countenance indefinite delay."[33] What then seems to be the best procedure? I would like to suggest the following:

1. Court decisions regarding desegregation must be clear and unequivocal. The many varied community responses to school desegregation seems to underscore at least one fundamental principle: During times of widespread social crises and revolutionary social changes, citizens need to be guided by the letter of the law and not be expected to respond to the spirit of the law. This is particularly true when the masses of citizens have been led to believe that the courts are in conflict with established cultural values or do not represent the people. Therefore, when already confused citizens give their own interpretations of the law, as implied in the spirit, their interpretations will likely reflect their own personal prejudices. Thus, "all deliberate speed" has been translated in several ways:

One, an administrative problem in some communities such as Louisville.

Two, an intellectual problem in several communities where only a token number of "intellectually-acceptable" Black children were admitted to white schools.

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33. The U. S. Supreme Court Decision. Watson vs. Memphis, May 27, 1963.

Three, a psychological problem in some instances whereby Black and white children would have to come to know each other and become accustomed to associating with one another beginning in first grade gradually through succeeding grades.

Four, as a community acceptance problem in some places whereby it was deemed necessary to first convert at least a majority of the white citizens before desegregation could work.

A fifth interpretation of the concept, and certainly the most frustrating, is that based upon the doctrine of "Community Schools." This doctrine holds that the school should be controlled by, and available to, those who occupy residences in the community in which it is located. Consequently, in places where there is more or less rigid ecological separation of races, schools would remain segregated until the neighborhoods become desegregated. Proponents of this doctrine naturally oppose the bussing of students from other neighborhoods.

It follows then that when citizens are expected to translate the spirit of the law during times of grave community crises, their interpretation of the law is likely to be quite contrary to the letter of the law or established justice in terms of the law. Accordingly, local officials so translated "the law" in school desegregation situations that they could maintain the status quo, essentially intact, for several years in some instances to "forever" in other instances, as promised by some officials.

Fortunately, federal courts and the U. S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare (HEW) are beginning to understand that the spirit of the law, as applied to the knotty problem of desegregation, is not sufficient to effectuate even minimal compliance with the letter of the law. Actually in some instances resegregation had begun to take place more rapidly than desegregation.

Beginning with its revised decision in 1969, which definitely changed the "all deliberate speed" concept to "at once," the Supreme Court functioned to rapidly restore order in the desegregation process. This decision, which is strongly supported by HEW, has provided definite guidelines in communities where formally anomie existed.

2. An attitude of compliance with constituted law on the part of top school officials. The desegregation process is disturbing in all communities even under the best combination of circumstances. It is particularly disturbing and most frustrating in communities where it is opposed by top political and/or school leadership. The key role of official leadership has been demonstrated over and over again. For instance, in communities, such as New Orleans, where race relations had been traditionally amicable, the failure of the official community to respond in a decisive manner resulted in near social chaos and school boycotts. Whereas in other communities where race relations had been traditionally inflexible, top leadership has taken a definite compliance stance and school desegregation seems to be progressing smoothly.

At this point it must be understood that the compliance stance on the part of responsible officials may be the result of personal convictions, public opinion or federal guidelines. Whatever the immediate reason for advocating compliance seems not to be an important consideration here. The best example of how the individual official can contribute to orderly desegregation is the leadership assumed by several superintendents of school districts. Perhaps the most publicized of these was Omer Carmichael of Louisville. Such superintendents have assumed the responsibility of not only developing feasible desegregation plans, but have felt called upon

to sell their plans to their school boards, administrative staffs and to the general public. All evidence indicates that wherever school superintendents have assumed a positive, clear-cut, vigorous leadership role desegregation has proceeded with relative calm and effectiveness.

What has been said about superintendents of school districts applies also to school boards. Wherever school boards have been opposed to or seriously divided in regard to basic desegregation issues, the community and the schools have suffered disruptions and conflict. This has been so whether the school boards were elected or appointed. Fundamentally, the most effective school boards have been mixed in the sense that they represent the basic social elements in the community, such as the business elite, the existing government, the major social classes and particularly the Black community.

When school board members are hopelessly divided or persist in opposition to desegregation the only agency that can restore order and progress is the federal government. This is so because a divided school board seems always to indicate a divided community and/or divided political leadership. In the first instance, when elected school boards are seriously divided it is likely that the electorate is divided. In such cases various pro and anti-desegregation forces will endeavor to select their own representatives to champion school issues as they interpret them. This has often meant that there is no recognized leader on the school board in the sense that anyone is able to command functional respect or effectuate a working consensus. On crucial issues individual representatives of special interest groups frequently make non-negotiable demands which result in non-action. Furthermore, whatever action taken by the majority of the

board is usually strenously opposed by the minority. Their differences, then, serve to reinforce already existing conflicts in the larger community.

In the second instance when an appointed school board is unreconcilably divided over the issue of desegregation, it usually reflects a comparable division among top political decision makers. Here again, the fact that responsible political representatives are divided on crucial community issues may in turn indicate a divided electorate. It might also indicate that a prolonged desegregation crisis has brought about rifts in an otherwise functionally homogeneous, apparently monolithic community power structure. Such rifts have been reflected in debilitating, hate-filled political campaigns, punitive action, a general breakdown in community consensus, paralysis of the educational process, and/or violence. The most notable example of this was Little Rock, Arkansas in 1957 when mobs took over. A state of anomie existed and federal troops had to be used to restore order.

It seems, therefore, that the quality of leadership furnished by school officials as well as the timing of their actions are crucial. On the one hand, lackadaisical, vacillating leadership has inevitably led to community disturbances and school paralysis, no matter when it was offered. On the other hand, positive, wise leadership on the part of school officials has often proven to be ineffective when it was exerted after divisions and chaos occured in the larger community. Likewise, when vigorous community leadership is too long postponed it eventually becomes ineffectual and it is generally necessary to turn to federal leadership in some form in order to establish order and proceed with desegregation plans.

3. The support of the white elite or "power structure" is essential. As noted above, in communities where more or less total racial segregation has been always the way of life, and where the doctrine of white supremacy has been accepted unquestionably by the great masses of white people, federal court orders to desegregate public schools can be a very traumatic experience. When such a community has not been skillfully prepared to comply with desegregation orders, records show that a large majority of its white citizens will interpret such orders as an unfair, even unconstitutional, invasion of their civil rights, and tend to regard all parties to the act as their enemies. Such a response has two interrelated negative consequences:

First, it destroys confidence in, and allegiance to constituted authority. Thus the court, which must be the ultimate source of impartiality and justice in an organized, stable society, becomes suspect. Its motives will be questioned and its decisions will be resented, rejected and, when possible, flaunted. When this happens the very foundation of justice, and even social morality, is compromised. Community consensus on major social issues will be shattered, and long-established social and moral norms will function to divide rather than unify key individuals and groups. Eventually old patterns of interpersonal, intergroup relations will deteriorate and conflict rather than order will become characteristic of the community. A true state of anomie will begin to emerge.

Second, when a large proportion of citizens lose faith in the court or the system of justice to which they must submit, they tend to exalt their own personal, prejudiced concept of "right" and "wrong", "just" and "unjust" above duly-established laws and legal procedures. There is always a grave danger that this individualistic interpretation of constituted

law will deteriorate to the point where small groups of disgruntled citizens will attempt to "take the law into their own hands." This inevitably leads to publicly proclaimed bigotry, the polarization of erstwhile cooperating individuals, groups and interests, and, often open violence. This is the advanced stage of anomie--community paralysis--which has occurred to some degree in all communities where the white elite (powerful business and professional men) either sought to remain neutral on school desegregation (in which case they were generally assumed to be opposed to desegregation), or tended to openly oppose it in their personal and/or public lives.

Certainly one of the clearest examples of how the failure of the elite to take a firm stand for desegregated schools as ordered by federal courts may lead to anomie and a serious degree of social paralysis and conflict, is the New Orleans experience. In that city the dominant newspaper, the Times-Picayune, best reflected the attitudes of the elite. Its official stand on the school desegregation issue was regularly presented in such editorials as this:

> "Public education, unquestionably, is a foundation of democracy, but whether public education can survive the forced integration of schools in a community like ours, with a large Negro population and ingrained customs, remains to be seen. Forced integration. . .is a tragedy just as closing of the schools would be a tragedy."

A later editorial concluded:

> "The choice as to whether closed schools are to be preferred to integrated schools is one which the people themselves must make."[34]

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34. Quoted from Robert L. Crain, The Politics of School Desegregation, Op. Cit., p. 247

The uncompromising non-compliance attitude on the part of the elite in New Orleans as expressed by the Times-Picayune, continued to worsen during the more than three years of crisis following the court order to desegregate its public schools (Bush vs. Orleans Parish School Board, 1956). No change was evident until December 14, 1960 when 105 influential business and professional men in New Orleans signed a three-quarter page advertisement which was carried by the Times-Picayune. Though their stand for "open schools" even if desegregated came very late, after there was widespread disruption and violence, it did function to restore some measure of community order by redefining the issue of school desegregation. In the first place it sanctioned the supremacy of constitutional law as interpreted by federal courts over personal prerogatives, no matter how unpleasant the law might be. Second, that elite redefined the issue as "no school versus desegregated schools." Faced with this clear choice, other less established community leaders began to seek ways to effectuate minimum compliance rather than continued "massive resistance." Therefore, just as an uncommitted or opposition elite can, and does, cause community disruption and violence, committed, positive leadership by the white elite has been an indispensable force in orderly school desegregation. Actually, according to published records, in all communities where the white elite acted quickly and firmly in favor of some definite desegregation plan, the plan was adopted with a minimum degree of community division and conflict.

The prime question, of course, is this: What motivates the elite to take positive action for desegregated schools? Any valid answer to this question must be complex and many-faceted because the elite is seldom or ever a monolity. The different segments of the elite are likely

to require different approaches and different motivations. However, fundamentally community elites have at least one thing in common, their elite status is accorded or sanctioned by an organized social system. Consequently, when that system experience anomie there are no longer established norms according to which they can be recognized as "elite." After all "the elite" is made up of those who symbolize certain highly valued norms. Thus when respect for these norms is destroyed, the "elite" by definition can not continue to exist. This is so whether the norms are regarding private property, official authority or freedom of the individual. Therefore, basically the elite is motivated to act positively for desegregated schools when it is convinced that its inaction or negative action may function to destroy certain basic norms undergirding its privileged status. Again, the convincing action may be public enlightenment through mass media, enlightened self-interest stemming from an objective analysis of its own welfare, or force as exerted by federal courts.

4. Finally, there must be a well-organized, respected Black leadership class. Traditionally, Black public schools have been notoriously inferior. Therefore, original desegregation plans assumed that desegregation would be a "one-way street." That is, Black children were expected to desegregate white schools. Consequently, pre-planning for desegregation was mostly directed to the white community. Little or no attention was given to the fact that desegregation is perhaps more traumatic for Blacks than for whites: First, until 1965 Black parents were called upon to submit their children to the hostile environment of white schools where they would certainly encounter insults, ostracism and often physical abuse. Second, the Black

community was frequently called upon to participate in various forms of direct action calculated to bring pressure upon public officials in order to force them to obey federal court orders. Third, it has been common for Black people to experience various forms of economic, civic and social retaliation when they advocated or participated in desegregation efforts. Finally, it has been always the Black school personnel who were in the greater danger of experiencing "displacement" or loss of jobs.

Since Blacks were expected to be the sole initiators of desegregation before 1965, and are still expected to furnish most of the leadership for the Civil Rights movement, strong Black leaders are indispensable in the comprehensive, orderly desegregation of public schools. As just suggested, they carry the total responsibility of gearing the Black community to initiate specific desegregation action and to give sustained support to the Civil Rights movement. There is also another essential function to be performed by Black leaders: They must facilitate creative communication between the Black community and the white power structure. In a very real sense they must operate on the frontier of race relations. In this capacity they must develop the skills necessary to negotiate successfully with the most knowledgeable, powerful, often hostile white community leaders.

The kind of skills Black leaders must have if they are to perform a creative service in school desegregation can be only developed by extensive experience in other areas of desegregation. Therefore, in communities where school desegregation has had the greatest success, such as St. Louis, Louisville, Atlanta, much of the success was due to astute leadership on the part of Blacks who had had previous experiences in desegregation efforts.

Where such leadership has been lacking or disorganized, desegregation has been a much more disturbing and disrupting experience as in Little Rock, New Orleans and Cairo, Illinois. Black leadership, then, is necessary in helping to prepare the Black and white communities if desegregation is truly to develop into integration.

Today, after two decades of litigation, disruptions and conflicts, de jure school desegregation is a generally accepted principle throughout the United States. Nevertheless, all is far from well: The more illusive problem—racial resegregation is now the major threat in school systems where there is a relatively large Black population. This resegregation process is extremely difficult to deal with legally because it is enmeshed in the total socio-economic fabric of American society. That is, white families, exercising their inalienable right to live where they choose, are rapidly abandoning the central cities and enrolling their children in public schools in more or less lily white suburbs. Other white families who choose to remain in or near the central city are sending their children to private schools in increasing numbers. Consequently, in public school systems throughout the United States schools, even those that were once ideally desegregated, are becoming all Black.

With Blacks concentrated in central cities, virtually locked out of lily white suburbs, and white families constantly moving into these suburbs, some knowledgeable observers predict that it is only a matter of time— a few years—before the vast majority of white and Black children will be again attending segregated schools. At present the only serious solution offered for this problem is bussing. This approach to the problem of

segregated schools is meeting much strong resistance from parents who claim that it is their inalienable right to send their children to neighborhood schools. The controversy is likely to continue for several years because even federal authorities and school officials as well as parents are divided on the issue.

The long range solution to school desegregation is, of course, open, democratic housing. However, at least one immediate approach to equality of education for all children is to make all public schools—whether in the Black ghetto or the affluent white suburb—equal in every respect. Some half-hearted attempts are being made by government on all levels to equalize educational opportunities. So far little real progress has been made. Children in all Black schools are still greatly short-changed. At present perhaps the most promising approach to the unique academic problems faced by Black children is being made by the federal Bureau of Educational and Personnel Development (BEPD) which sponsors programs for the special education of teachers who are teaching or plan to teach in desegregated classrooms. This program of Teacher Training for Desegregating Institutions is especially promising. Essentially it is designed to prepare teachers to become academic leaders as well as "master teachers." Hopefully this and other similar programs will be expanded so that eventually creative educators will be available in sufficient numbers to stimulate and guide a truly academic revolution in public school education.